

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-11, 13-26, 30, and 46-49 are pending. Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 6, 8-11, 13-23 and 46-49, and the conditional allowance of claim 26. Claim 26 has been rewritten in independent form as recommended by the Examiner and is deemed allowable. Claims 1 and 24 have been amended. As the amendments include material similar to that already considered by the Examiner with respect to allowed claims 6 and 46, these amendments do not require further search or consideration and should be entered.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Independent claims 1 and 24

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,862,485 to Linneweh Jr. et al. ("Linneweh") and over U.S. Patent No. 6,263,203 to Jahn ("Jahn"). Claim 24 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,438,370 to Einola, et al. ("Einola").

As provided in MPEP § 2143, "[t]o establish a prima facie case of obviousness, ... the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations." Furthermore, under MPEP § 2142, "[i]f the examiner does not produce a prima facie case, the applicant is under no obligation to submit evidence of nonobviousness." It is submitted that the Office action fails to factually support a prima facie case of obviousness based on Linneweh, Einola, and Jahn for the following reasons.

Independent claim 1

Amended claim 1 recites includes certain novel elements that are similar to those of allowed claim 6. Therefore, claim 1 should be allowed.

Independent claim 24

Amended claim 24 includes certain novel elements that are similar to those of allowed claim 46. Thus, claim 24 should be allowed.

Dependent claims

Claims 2-5, 25, and 30 depend from and further limit their respective independent claims 1 and 24, and should also be allowed for at least the same reason as the claim from which they depend.

Conclusion

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims in the application are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner deem that any further amendment is desirable to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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